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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1997

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to inform the General Assembly of the requirements resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1997.

2. The Council has adopted a number of resolutions on restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the regional commissions, in particular, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (resolution 1997/4 of 18 July 1997), the Economic Commission for Africa (resolution 1997/5 of 18 July 1997) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (resolutions 1997/10, 1997/11, 1997/12 and 1997/14 of 18 July 1997). In some instances, the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of those regional commissions would entail changes in their calendar of meetings and conferences for the biennium 1996-1997 or 1998-1999. It is the intention of the Secretary-General to accommodate the revised conference-servicing requirements of these commissions from within the provisions made in the relevant sections of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 or the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, as appropriate.

3. The Council also adopted a number of resolutions and decisions in which it authorized relevant functional commissions, standing committees or expert bodies to undertake additional activities, including meetings, in excess of those initially programmed in the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 or in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. In accordance with rule 31 of its rules of procedure, the Council was provided, where appropriate,

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with a statement of programme budget implications prior to the adoption of the resolutions and decisions. It should be noted that none of those statements dealt with substantive additional requirements. The statements dealt only with additional conference-servicing requirements. In each statement the Council was informed: (a) that provision was made under the section on Conference Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 or the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings were consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years; (b) that the additional requirements entailed by the relevant resolution/decision were, therefore to be dealt with within the overall provisions for the conference-servicing of the United Nations meetings and conferences, contained in the programme budget for the relevant biennium; and (c) that the actual conference-servicing costs of the meetings called for by the relevant resolution/decision were to be reported to the General Assembly in the context of the second performance report for the biennium 1996-1997 or 1998-1999, as appropriate.

4. By its decision 1997/293 of 23 July 1997, entitled "Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", the Council approved the request of the Commission on Human Rights to recommend to the General Assembly to convene not later than the year 2001 a world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to undertake a number of preparatory activities for the conference. The text of decision 1997/293 is before the General Assembly in document A/C.3/52/L.9. Should the Assembly take action on the Council's recommendation, a statement of programme budget implications of the decision would be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session, in accordance with established procedure.

5. At its sixteenth session, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of three decisions (E/1997/L.23), as follows:

(a) Draft decision I. The Economic and Social Council, concerned that there was currently a backlog of reports awaiting consideration by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which would take up to three years to clear on the basis of existing arrangements, would approve, on an exceptional basis, the holding of one additional three-week session of the Committee in the course of 1998, as well as a pre-sessional working group of one week's duration;

(b) Draft decision II. The Council, noting that the effectiveness and profile of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights could be further enhanced by holding occasional sessions in New York, would approve the holding of the Committee's nineteenth session, in late 1998, in New York;

(c) Draft decision III. The Council, recalling that no action had yet been taken by the General Assembly with regard to Council decisions 1993/297 and 1995/302 A and noting that honorariums were already being paid to members of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, would call upon the Assembly to take appropriate action to remedy the situation by approving the

payment of an honorarium, as from 1997, to the members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

6. A statement on the programme budget implications of those proposals was submitted to the Council in document E/1997/L.44. In that statement, the additional requirements with respect to draft decisions I and II were estimated to amount to $219,000 for travel costs under section 22, Human rights, and $952,800 (at full cost) under section 27 E, Conference services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Subsequently, however, the Council postponed its consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the second part of its resumed substantive session of 1997 to be convened in December 1997. Should the Council, at that resumed substantive session, take action on the recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Secretariat would submit to the Assembly at its current fifty-second session, an addendum to the present report informing it of any additional requirements that might be entailed by the Council's action.

7. In summary, the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its sessions of 1997 do not give rise at this stage to a need for additional appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997 or 1998-1999.